CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for screening electronic messages, comprising the steps of:

determining, for a designated receiver of a first electronic message from a

5   sender, whether the electronic message includes a pass from the receiver;

forwarding the first electronic message to the receiver, responsive to the

message having the pass; and

generating a notice to the sender, responsive to the message not having the

pass, including information requesting the sender to return, to an indicated address, a

10   pass for the first electronic message .

2. The method of claim 1, wherein there are a plurality of first electronic

messages and the method comprises the step of:

intercepting the first electronic messages by a screening agent for the

15   designated receiver; and

performing steps a), b) and c) for each one of the respective first messages.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the first electronic messages have

respective reply addresses, and the method comprises the step of:

20   sending the respective passes to the respective senders at the reply addresses

of the respective electronic messages.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the sending includes concatenating at least a portion of such a pass to a reply address of a second electronic message.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the sending includes sending at least

5   portion of such a pass in an attachment to a second electronic message

6. The method of claim 2, wherein such a notice includes a reference which points to a source for the pass.

10   7. The method of claim 6, wherein the source includes a web page.

8. A computer program product in a computer readable media for use in a data processing system for screening electronic messages, the computer program product comprising:

first instructions for determining, for a designated receiver of a first electronic

5   message from a sender, whether the electronic message includes a pass from the receiver;

second instructions for forwarding the first electronic message to the receiver, responsive to the message having the pass; and

third instructions for generating a notice to the sender, responsive to the

10 message not having the pass, including information requesting the sender to return, to an indicated address, a pass for the first electronic message.

9. The computer program product of claim 8, wherein there are a plurality of first electronic messages, and the computer program product comprises:

15 fourth instructions for intercepting the first electronic messages for the designated receiver, wherein the first, second and third instructions are executed for each one of the respective first electronic messages.

10. The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the first electronic

20 messages have respective reply addresses, and the computer program product comprises:

fifth instructions for sending the respective passes to the respective senders at the reply addresses of the respective electronic messages.

11. The computer program product of claim 10, wherein the sending includes
concatenating at least a portion of such a pass to a reply address of a second electronic
message.

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12. The computer program product of claim 10, wherein the sending includes
sending at least portion of such a pass in an attachment to a second electronic message

13. The computer program product of claim 9, wherein such a notice includes

10   a reference which points to a source for the pass.

14. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the source includes a
web page.

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15.   A system for screening electronic messages, comprising:

first means for determining, for a designated receiver of a first electronic message from a sender, whether the electronic message includes a pass from the receiver;

5   second means for forwarding the first electronic message to the receiver, responsive to the message having the pass;   and

third means for generating a notice to the sender, responsive to the message not having the pass, including information requesting the sender to return, to an indicated address, a pass for the first electronic message.

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16. The system of claim 15, wherein there are a plurality of first electronic messages and the system comprises:

fourth means for intercepting the first electronic messages by a screening agent for the designated receiver, wherein for each one of the respective first

15   electronic messages the first means determines, for a designated receiver of the respective one of the first electronic messages, whether the electronic message includes a pass from the receiver, the second means forwards the electronic message to the receiver, responsive to the message having the pass, and the third means generates a notice to a sender of the message, responsive to the message not having

20   the pass, wherein the notice includes information to advise the sender to return, to an indicated address, a pass for the electronic message generated on behalf of the designated receiver.

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17. The system of claim 16, wherein the first electronic messages have respective reply addresses, and the system comprises:

means for sending the respective passes to the respective senders at the reply addresses of the respective electronic messages.

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18. The system of claim 17, wherein the sending means includes means for concatenating at least a portion of such a pass to a reply address of a second electronic message.

10 19. The system of claim 17, wherein the sending means includes means for sending at least portion of such a pass in an attachment to a second electronic message

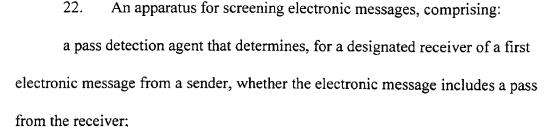20. The system of claim 16, wherein such a notice includes a reference which points to a source for the pass.

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21. The system of claim 20, wherein the source includes a web page.

22.   An apparatus for screening electronic messages, comprising:

a pass detection agent that determines, for a designated receiver of a first

electronic message from a sender, whether the electronic message includes a pass

from the receiver;

5   a forwarding agent, in communication with the pass detection agent, that

forwards the first electronic message to the receiver, responsive to an indication by

the pass detection agent that the message has the pass;   and

a notification agent , in communication with the pass detection agent, that

generates a notice to the sender, responsive to an indication by the pass detection

10   agent that the message does not have the pass, including information requesting the

sender to return, to an indicated address, a pass for the first electronic message.

23. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein there are a plurality of first electronic

messages and the apparatus comprises:

15   an intercepting agent, in communication with the pass detection agent, for

intercepting the first electronic messages for the designated receiver, wherein for each

one of the respective first electronic messages the pass detection agent determines, for

a designated receiver of the respective one of the first electronic messages, whether

the electronic message includes a pass from the receiver, the forwarding agent

20   forwards the electronic message to the receiver, responsive to the message having the

pass, and the notification agent generates a notice to a sender of the message,

responsive to the message not having the pass, the notice including information

requesting the sender to return, to an indicated address, a pass for the electronic

message.

24. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the first electronic messages have respective reply addresses, and the notification agent sends the respective passes to

5   the respective senders at the reply addresses of the respective electronic messages.

25. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the notification agent concatenates at least a portion of such a pass to a reply address of a second electronic message.

10   26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the notification agent sends at least portion of such a pass in an attachment to a second electronic message

27. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein such a notice includes a reference which points to a source for the pass.

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28. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the source includes a web page.